RHABDODON MATHERON, 1869 (REPTILIA, ORNITHISCHIA): PROPOSED CONSERVATION BY SUPPRESSION OF *RHABDODON* FLEISCHMANN, 1831 (REPTILIA, SERPENTES). Z.N.(S.) 2536

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The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is asked to use its plenary powers to suppress an older homonym, which has been used only once, of *Rhabdodon* Matheron, 1869, in order to make valid the use of this name for a widely-spread and well-known European dinosaur.

2. In 1831 the physician F. L. Fleischmann published his thesis written at the then Friedrich-Alexander Universität, Erlangen (Fed. Rep. of Germany). In this paper (p. 26) he describes and shows two specimens of living snakes. One of them (Tafel 2) is clearly a Montpellier Snake, *Malpolon monspessulanus* Hermann, 1804, but was considered as a new genus and species by the author and was given the binomen *Rhabdodon fuscus* Fleischmann, 1831. My extensive attempts to discover an original specimen of Fleischmann's snake have been unsuccessful, and the type of *Rhabdodon fuscus* Fleischmann, 1831 must have been lost. Fleischmann himself says in a footnote that the specimen was kept in his private collection.

3. A revision of the literature concerned has revealed that *Rhabdodon* Fleischmann, 1831 has not been recognized as a valid genus of snakes by any of the workers who have followed. Schinz (1840, p. 50) removed *Rhabdodon* Fleischmann, 1831 into synonymy. Other important publications in which *Rhabdodon fuscus* is regarded as a synonym are Boulenger (1896, vol. 3, p. 141), Günther (1858, p. 138), Romer (1956, p. 579) and Schreiber (1875, p. 219; 1912, p. 638). *Rhabdodon fuscus* is not in the lists of synonymy in two works which are decisive for the nomenclature of European amphibians and reptiles (Mertens & Müller, 1928; 1940). However, Mertens & Wermuth (1960, p. 185) mentioned that *Rhabdodon fuscus* is a synonym of *Malpolon monspessulanus*.

4. When *Rhabdodon* Matheron, 1869 (Ornithopoda) was established two different spellings were used by the author: *Rabdodon* in the text of Matheron (1869b), *Rhabdodon* in the text of Matheron (1869a) and at the top of the tables in Matheron (1869b). As far as I know Gaudry (1890, p. 222) and Zittel (1890, p. 763) were the first authors to quote this genus, and they adopted *Rhabdodon* as the correct original spelling. All later workers, including Matheron (1892) have adhered to this, and so *Rhabdodon* Matheron, 1869 enters into homonymy with *Rhabdodon* Fleischmann, 1831.

5. *Rhabdodon priscus* Matheron, 1869 (specific name corrected from *priscum*) is one of the dinosaurs which are known as the first representatives of this group of reptiles from the Upper Cretaceous of Europe. The type material comes from Provence and is housed in the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, Palais Longchamp, Marseille. This material includes jaw-bones

of *Rhabdodon priscus* with very characteristic teeth. In the drawings published by Matheron (1869b) one important feature of the teeth of *Rhabdodon priscus* is not shown (Nopcsa, 1915). Three papers were published before 1915 (Seeley, 1881; Nopcsa, 1902, 1904) in which *Rhabdodon* material from other parts of Europe (Austria, Romania) was described under the name *Mochlodon* Seeley, 1881 (p. 624). In 1915 Nopcsa pointed out the mistake in the drawings published by Matheron (1869b), and it became clear that *Rhabdodon* Matheron, 1869 is a genus of dinosaurs widely distributed throughout the Upper Cretaceous of Europe, including Spain (de Lapparent & Aguirre, 1956).

6. The type species *Rhabdodon priscus* is easy to define on account of the morphology of its teeth. This is why *Rhabdodon* Matheron, 1869 can be clearly distinguished from other genera. I know of only two papers published after 1915 in which *Mochlodon* Seeley, 1881 is used as a name of the genus-group (Harland *et al.*, 1967, p. 716; Weishampel & Weishampel, 1983, p. 44). All other workers have used *Rhabdodon* Matheron, 1869 as the name of this taxon in their studies of European dinosaurs from the Upper Cretaceous; it has become widely known and has found its way into the textbooks of palaeontology, e.g. Abel (1919, p. 618), Huene (1956, p. 537), Kuhn (1936, p. 37; 1964, p. 12), Müller (1968, p. 472), Piveteau (1955, p. 836), Romer (1956, p. 629; 1966, p. 370), and Steel (1969, p. 19). It continues to be used at the present time.

7. From what has been said in this paper it becomes obvious that *Rhabdodon* is by far the most frequently used name of this dinosaur from the Upper Cretaceous and that information on this genus can, as a rule, be found under *Rhabdodon* Matheron, 1869, whereas *Rhabdodon fuscus* Fleischmann, 1831 has remained totally unused. Furthermore, it can be stated that the taxonomy of European snakes is so well known that *Rhabdodon* Fleischmann, 1831 is not needed as a name of the genus-group.

8. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is therefore asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the generic name *Rhabdodon* Fleischmann, 1831 (type species, by monotypy, *Rhabdodon fuscus* Fleischmann, 1831) for the purposes of the Principles of Homonymy and of Priority;

(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Rhabdodon* Matheron, 1869 (gender: masculine), type species, by monotypy, *Rhabdodon priscus* Matheron, 1869;

(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *priscus* Matheron, 1869, as published in the binomen *Rhabdodon priscum* Matheron, 1869 (1869a, 1869b) (specific name of the type species of *Rhabdodon* Matheron, 1869);

(4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the name *Rhabdodon* Fleischmann, 1831, suppressed as in (1) above, for the purposes of the Principles of Priority and of Homonymy.

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